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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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BRIEFING PAPER

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HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

- o Repression has eased but remains severe. Disaffection with the current leadership is widespread. Intellectuals and many urban workers are deeply alienated but generally cowed.
- Beijing has adopted a slightly less negative public posture toward human rights approaches from abroad, as reflected in A/S Schifter's visit and the low-key response to our 1990 human rights report.
- At the same time, the government has given its people clear notice that no repetition of the 1989 protests would be tolerated, and has indicated no interest in continuing the dialogue initiated by Schifter.
- o Despite official statements that trials of Tiananmen-era dissidents are "basically complete," at least 250 Beijing detainees (and hundreds in other cities) remain unaccounted for, and reports of convictions continue.
- About 30 persons have been convicted on political charges since the beginning of the year and sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to 15 years. A few, particularly those with strong foreign connections, were convicted but released on time served. Some 63 others have been released without trial.
- China's Supreme Court President recently acknowledged that 787 persons have been prosecuted in Beijing alone since 1989 on charges linked to Tiananmen, including 72 for political offenses. Nationwide, we estimate that over a thousand have been sentenced by the courts and as many as a few thousand others sent to labor reeducation camps without trial.
- Security forces continue to suppress even minor acts of dissent, and there have been several arrests in the past year. At least one of those arrested for demonstrating on the first anniversary of the Beijing massacre is scheduled for trial soon.
- o Even before Tiananmen, Chinese authorities had begun to rein in the activities of both official and underground religious organizations, presumably because they feared the kind of politico-religious influence that spurred recent transformations in Eastern Europe.
- Some 15 more underground Catholics were detained in Fujian in July 1990, and about the same number in Hebei late in the year.

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- Some unconfirmed reports indicate that at least 200 Protestant house churches have been closed in East China in the past year. Shanghai religious authorities deny any knowledge of such closings.
- After a Muslim revolt in Xinjiang in early 1990, authorities closed or stopped construction of hundreds of unauthorized mosques and religious schools, and have begun reregistration of all Muslim clerics.
- Recent reports indicate that even the official Catholic and Protestant organizations are subject to stricter monitoring and control.
- o Tension is rising again in Tibet, and is likely to remain high at least through May. The Chinese are trying to maintain a facade of celebration of the 40th anniversary of "peaceful liberation" on May 23, while Tibetan emigres have organized public events worldwide to intensify the focus on Chinese repression.
- o Limited debate is now permitted in academic journals on some economic and social issues, but controls on political expression remain as tight as in 1989.
- o Emigres claim a new State Council directive prohibits foreign travel for relatives of prominent overseas dissidents. If true, this would be seen by Congress as a violation of the Solarz Amendment on harassment of citizens overseas, and of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.
- Several leading dissidents in the U.S. have been denied extension or renewal of their PRC passports.
- o Chinese claims to the contrary notwithstanding, jamming of VOA and BBC Mandarin services continues unabated. Beijing has protested the inauguration of VOA's Tibetan service in March, but apparently has not yet begun to jam it.
- o Reported incidence of forced abortion and sterilization has been low in recent years, but remains the subject of intense criticism by some in Congress.

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